

2 YOUTH AND FAMILY OUTREACH SUPPORT PROGRAM

FILE REFERENCE INT1933122

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council awards the contract for the Youth and Family Outreach Support Program to TaskForce Community Agency. The initial contract term will be 1 July 2019 - 30 June 2021 with an option to extend for a further 2 years from 1 July 2021- 30 June 2023.

The total amount of funding for the period July 2019- June 2021 is \$225K (excluding GST)

The total amount of funding for the period July 2021-July 2023 is \$245K (excluding GST)

Attachments

1 Confidential Memorandum, circulated to Councillors only 2 Pages

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An assessment panel which was made up of three representatives from Council (Mark Carter, Emma Firth and Pam Martin) as well as two representatives of the Youth Strategy Reference Group (Yvette Shaw from the Department of Health and Human Services and Bridget Hanson from Victorian Legal Aide) met on Monday 29 April.

Applications were received from Windermere Child and Family Services, Wellways Australia, Better Places Australia, EACH, Mission Australia and TaskForce Community Agency.

A decision was unanimously made by the Assessment Panel that TaskForce would be the most suitable organisation to implement a responsive and holistic outreach model to a complex cohort of young people and their families.

TaskForce will employ a full-time worker to the role and co-contribute administration and management expenses to the program delivery.

TaskForce are a reputable not-for-profit and well established organisation who have expanded their services to young people, families and community in the Cardinia Shire for over 15 years. TaskForce has delivered a range of youth and family focused initiatives and services locally and worked in partnership with Council and other local service providers including but not limited to: Kooweerup Regional Health Service Youth Hub; auspice for the Cockatoo Community Centre; Windermere; headspace; Anglicare; and Child First.

BACKGROUND

The prevalence of mental health issues is an area of concern for Cardinia Shire's residents and young people and is exacerbated by the limited outreach support services that work with young people and are of benefit to their families.

Local support/counselling services remain restricted in the type and length of support that can be provided to young people. Young people may not be eligible for support because they do not have a diagnosed mental health condition; have not been disengaged from education for the required length; or the service is family focused and therefore support to the young person cannot continue if the family disengages from the service.

The limited services that are currently available to young people in Cardinia are often centre-based, do not include family friendly practices and have waiting lists of up to three months.

In 2016 Council approved the allocation of \$135K to deliver a 12 month pilot project to increase the positive mental health of young people in Cardinia in 2016. The project has been delivered by Windermere Child and Family Services from January 2016 until June 2019 (end of contact).

In April 2018 SLT approved \$575K over five years to deliver a preventative youth mental health outreach program for young people and their families.

SLT approved the extension of Windermere contract until June 2019 with the following conditions:

- Team Leader Youth Services to be involved in the initial and any future recruitment of any youth/family workers funded by Council;
- Youth worker to be based at My Place and be available to attend My Place service provider and secondary consultation meetings facilitated by Early in Life Mental Health Services;
- Windermere and Council to review and agree the existing evaluation framework for parents and young people; and
- 20% of clients to reside outside of the growth corridor (Beaconsfield, Officer and Pakenham).

A further extension to this contract could not be made after June 2019. Council put out an EOI on 23 March 2019 with applications closing on 16 April 2019.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Addressing gaps in support services for young people with complex support needs assists in the implementation of Council's Child, Youth and Family Strategy and Council's Liveability Plan Policy (Education and Employment as well as Health and Social Services domains).

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

Supports Council Plan action:

- 1.1.2 Routinely review overall community needs for services and either deliver or advocate for others to provide services to meet those needs.
- 1.2.2 Advocate for increased locally based health services to support our young people.
- 1.4.3 Routinely review community health and wellbeing issues to inform Council's activities.
- 1.4.4 Support children, young people, families, older adults and people of all abilities by providing a range of accessible services and facilities.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

Consultation with young people and families accessing the Windermere Youth and Family Outreach service has been collected and shared with the Youth Strategy Reference Group over the life of the program.

Consultation has taken place with Councillors and SLT throughout the initial Windermere pilot project to provide updates about the program's success, challenges and modifications made to the service model to ensure that it was meeting Council expectations and the needs of young people and families.

Consultation has also taken place with the Youth and Family Outreach and Support Program Assessment Panel (internal and external representation with knowledge of local youth needs and organisation strengths/weaknesses).

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Utilising Council funds to commission a not-for-profit or community youth organisation to deliver an outreach support program to young people and their families has positive financial implications for Council.

The Expression of Interest highlighted that a co-contribution to the project would be considered favourably.

In addition to the Council contribution of \$225K for the July 2019-June 2021 contract TaskForce will co-contribute administration and management support to delivery of the Youth and Family Outreach Support Program.

TaskForce will provide a full time worker to deliver this project.

Funding is to increase \$5K per year (approved by SLT April 2018) to cover increase in staff salaries and on-costs so that service delivery to young people and families does not decrease annually

CONCLUSION

Young people in Cardinia are experiencing a range of complex issues, which impacts on their mental health and ability to live happy and productive lives.

In order to maximise Council funds to support young people and their families an Expression of Interest with a broad set of assessment criteria has been undertaken.

Council are asked to award the contract to TaskForce Community Agency as the provider of the Youth and Family Outreach and Support Program from July 2019- June 2021 with the option for a further two years.